

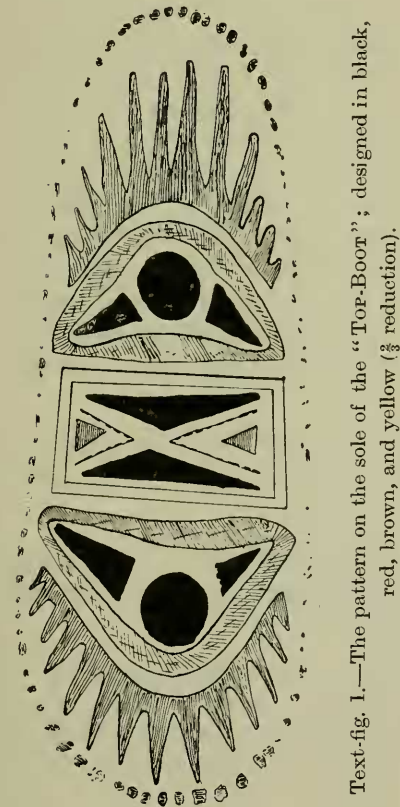
A SUPPOSITIOUS TOP-BOOT, IN THE QUEENSLAND MUSEUM COLLECTIONS.

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(Plate X and One Text-figure.)

THERE is in the collections of the Queensland Museum an ethnological specimen of great interest but of doubtful locality and significance. The object represents what may be designated as a "top-boot" made of cocoanut fibre ornamented with distinct designs in white, red, and black, yellow being also introduced, and labelled as such I find it entered in one of the registers—No. 6082. I am not in the position, however, to either contradict or confirm the statement, since though it may have the shape of a "top-boot" it is hardly to be supposed that it would be used in that way, especially as the upper portion is sewn to the sole so that communication between the upper and lower portions is entirely impossible.

In order to make these few remarks more intelligible, the specimen has been reproduced on Plate X, of which the front view is given. The ornamentation on the back is very similar, and as there is an interesting design on the sole of the object, a figure of this (Text-figure No. 1) is also reproduced. The question naturally arises as to what can be its use, and on this point I am quite unable to throw any light. Mr. Douglas Rannie has suggested the possibility of such a boot being used for the Malekula effigies, and, since the lower limbs of these are usually mere stumps, it does not require a very extensive amount of imagination to attribute to these "top-boots" such a function. The effigies would doubtless find them useful.



Text-fig. 1.—The pattern on the sole of the "Top-Boot"; designed in black, red, brown, and yellow (½ reduction).

Somehow this explanation does not meet with favour, and even if such were the case it has yet to be proved that this specimen came from Malekula or the neighbouring islands. It is to be earnestly hoped that, if any information concerning this could be obtained, ethnologists will not fail to communicate with the author.